

4.4- SE/12/00557/FUL

Date expired 10 May 2012

PROPOSAL:

Erection of new dwelling and detached cartshed.

LOCATION:

Chevening Home Farm, Sundridge Hill, Sundridge TN14 6AJ

WARD(S):

Brasted, Chevening And Sundridge

ITEM FOR DECISION

This item has been referred to the Development Control Committee by Councillor Piper to discuss issues regarding agricultural need, Green Belt impact and impact upon the AONB.

RECOMMENDATION: That planning permission be GRANTED subject to the following conditions:-

1) The development hereby permitted shall be begun before the expiration of three years from the date of this permission.

In pursuance of section 91 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990.

2) No development shall be carried out on the land until details of the materials to be used in the construction of the external surfaces of the dwelling hereby permitted have been submitted to and approved in writing by the Council. The development shall be carried out using the approved materials.

To ensure that the appearance of the development is in harmony with the existing character of the site as supported by Policy EN1 of the Sevenoaks District Local Plan.

3) No development shall be carried out on the land until full details of soft landscape works have been submitted to and approved in writing by the Council. Those details shall include:-planting plans (identifying existing planting, plants to be retained and new planting);-a schedule of new plants (noting species, size of stock at time of planting and proposed number/densities); and-a programme of implementation.-materials for all hard landscaping- boundary treatment. The scheme shall be implemented in accordance with the approved details. Any plants that are damaged, become diseased, die or are removed within 5 years of the implementation of the scheme shall be replaced with species of a size and in a location to be agreed in writing by the Local Planning Authority.

To ensure a satisfactory appearance upon completion.

4) The occupation of the dwelling shall be limited to a person solely or mainly working, or last working, in the locality in agriculture, or in forestry or a dependant of such a person residing with him or her, or a widow or widower of such a person.

This permission is granted specifically because of the special circumstances of this case; as the proposal is contrary to the policies of the development plan.

5) Prior to the commencement of development, details shall be submitted in writing to and be approved by the Local Planning Authority of proposed wheel washing facilities.

The approved facilities shall be maintained throughout the duration of the works.

To ensure that the nearby public highway remains clear of mud and debris.

6) Before the use or occupation of the development hereby permitted, the car and lorry parking and turning areas and servicing areas shown on the approved plan shall be provided and shall be kept available for the parking of cars and lorries and for servicing at all times.

In the interest of highway safety.

7) No development shall take place until details of the: existing levels of the land; any proposed slab levels and any changes in levels have been submitted for approval. The development shall be carried out in accordance with the approved details.

To ensure a satisfactory appearance upon completion.

8) The ecological enhancements referred to in paragraph 4.11 of the report Bats Buildings and Barn Owls shall be implemented during the construction of the development hereby approved and shall be permanently retained thereafter.

To ensure compliance with the objectives of the National Planning Policy Framework.

9) The development hereby permitted shall be carried out in accordance with the following approved plans: insert

For the avoidance of doubt and in the interests of proper planning.

The works would preserve and protect the setting of the Registered Parkland

The following very special circumstances exceptionally outweigh any harm by reason of inappropriateness and any additional harm to the Metropolitan Green Belt by reason of other factors: Need for a new agricultural dwelling.

In determining this application, the Local Planning Authority has had regard to the following Development Plan Policies:

The South East Plan 2009 - Policies SP3, SP5, H1,-H5, T1

Sevenoaks District Local Plan - Policies EN1, VP1

Sevenoaks District Core Strategy 2011 – Policies SP1,-SP3, L08

The following is a summary of the main reasons for the decision:

The scale, location and design of the development would respect the context of the site and preserve the visual amenities of the locality.

Description of Proposal

1 Permission is sought for the erection of a new detached farmhouse to be sited adjacent to existing farm buildings at Home Farm.

- 2 The house would be located to the north of the existing access road to the farm in the north west corner of the farm – some 38m from the nearest building to the east and 34m from the nearest building to the south.
- 3 The position of the house has been amended so that it does not project beyond the outermost edge of farm buildings to the east and south.
- 4 The house would comprise a 2 storey traditionally designed house with brick and tile hung elevations and a pitched tiled roof. A pitched, tiled porch canopy runs along part of the front elevation and a single storey pitched tiled office extension runs across part of the eastern elevation. The accommodation would provide a kitchen/living room, with separate utility and family room and as mentioned above a small office.
- 5 At first floor, 4 double bedrooms with family bathroom are proposed. A single cart shed style garage with secure store for mowers/tools, etc. would lie between the house and the access road to the farm. It is also of a traditional design with weather boarded elevations and a pitched tiled roof.
- 6 As a result of the re-organisation of the Chevening Estate the dairy farming operations formerly based at Turvins Farm have been moved to this site, over a period of some years. A number of buildings, including a dairy, have been approved and built at this site. A stockpersons cottage lies some 250m from the site in West Lodge although the tenant farmer still lives at Turvins Farm, some 2.5 miles away. As the herd has increased in size and is planned to continue to do so, this has generated a requirement for further accommodation in close proximity to the site. It is this requirement that the proposed new farmhouse seeks to achieve.

Description of Site

- 7 The site of the proposed house comprises land adjacent to the existing agricultural buildings of Home Farm, lying to the north of the access track to the farm from Sundridge Hill.
- 8 The farm comprises a range of agricultural buildings set either side of the entrance road which runs from Sundridge Hill through the farm and on to Chevening House. At the junction with Sundridge Hill lies a small lodge building (West Lodge) providing some accommodation for this farm.
- 9 The farm as a whole lies on a sloping site in a highly visible position within the surrounding landscape. The wider farm site is edged with a tree belt to the north and west with the parkland of Chevening House to the east. There is some tree screening of the farm when viewed from the south.
- 10 Chevening House is a Grade I 17th C house surrounded by formal gardens and extensive parkland dating from predominantly the late 18th C registered at Grade II*.

Constraints

- 11 The site lies within the Green Belt, Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, an Area of Archaeological Potential, registered Park of Historic Interest whilst the woodlands to the west and north are a Site of Nature Conservation interest.

Policies

South East Plan

12 Policies- SP5, C3, H1,-H5, T1, T4, NRM5, BE6

Sevenoaks District Local Plan

13 Policies - EN1, EN25A, EN26, GB1, VP1

Core Strategy

14 Policies - L01, L08, SP1, SP2, SP3, SP5, SP11

Other

15 NPPF

Planning History

16 SE/11/2139/FUL - Erection of new dwellings and detached garage/store - Withdrawn

SE/10/01310 - Steel framed building - Granted

SE/10/72 - New Ag building - Granted

SE/08/555 - New Agricultural Building - Granted

SE/74/590 - Barn and implement store - Granted

SW5/72/549 - Barn Extension - Granted

SW5/71/319 - Erection of a barn - Granted

SW5/64 - Alterations to form yard and parlour - Granted

Consultations

Natural England

17 Identified that potentially bats may use this site and further investigation should be provided.

KCC Highways

18 No objection although wheel washing facilities are suggested to prevent the spread of mud onto the adjacent highway.

KCC Ecology

19 We recommend that the enhancement provided in S4.11 of the Extended Phase I Habitat Survey, Bat & Buildings and Barn Owls Survey are implemented.

SDC Tree Officer

- 20 In view of the lack of vegetation on this site, I have no objection to the proposed development. Those mature trees situated opposite should be unaffected by the proposed development.

Thames Water

- 21 No objection

KCC Archaeology

- 22 Views awaited

Garden History Society

- 23 Views awaited

English Heritage

- 24 Chevening House is a highly significant early seventeenth-century house, listed at grade I. It is surrounded by formal pleasure grounds and extensive parkland registered at grade II* and dating predominantly from the late eighteenth century.
- 25 This is the second of two recent applications for a single agricultural dwelling towards the western edge of the Chevening estate, to serve the complex of twentieth-century farm buildings known as Home Farm. The first application (SE/11/02139) sited the house to the southwest of farmstead, just outside the registered park, but that application was withdrawn over concerns about its likely impact on long views across the Green Belt and the North Downs AONB. This second application has the proposed dwelling re-sited to the northwest of the farmstead, where it would now be positioned just within the boundary of the registered park.
- 26 It is not for English Heritage to comment on the proposed case for an agricultural dwelling to serve this farm, but because this application affects a designated heritage asset, we would expect the applicant to have described its significance in sufficient detail to understand the effects of the proposal on that significance (see paragraph 128 of the NPPF). It is not currently acknowledged in the application that the proposed site is within a registered park and there is no assessment provided of the effects of this proposal on the significance of that designated heritage asset. We suggest that this information should be sought to aid your Council's consideration of this application.
- 27 The parkland surround Home farm is, as might be expected, more agricultural in character than at the heart of the historic park to the east and north of the registered area. Much of its eighteenth-century character has been lost as a result of the removal of parkland trees, but the rolling landscape and woodland fringe to the north of the application site are nonetheless characteristic. The openness of the landscape that has resulted from the absence of trees would increase the prominence of the proposed dwelling. Therefore, if an agricultural dwelling is acceptable to your Council in principle, we suggest that this house could be made a less dominant feature in its parkland setting by bringing it closer

to the existing farmstead and by reinforcing the park's historic character by replanting parkland trees to its south.

Recommendation

- 28 We would urge you to address the above issues, and recommend that the application should be determined in accordance with national and local policy guidance, and on the basis of your specialist conservation advice. It is not necessary for us to be consulted again. However, if you would like further advice, please contact us again to explain your request.

Rural Planning Consultant

- 29 Consultations with the Rural Planning Consultant commenced prior to the introduction of the NPPF and his comments therefore refer to PPS7 *Sustainable Development in Rural Areas* and Annex A to that Guidance, dealing specifically with *Agricultural, Forestry and Other Occupational Dwellings*. That guidance has been superseded by the National Planning Policy Framework which deals with such development at paragraph 55 and states only that *Local planning authorities should avoid new isolated homes in the countryside unless there are special circumstances such as...the essential need for a rural worker to live permanently at or near their place of work in the countryside*.
- 30 The essential need for a rural worker to live permanently at or near their place of work in the countryside” can only be judged on an objective basis, and it is suggested therefore that the methodology explained in Annex A to PPS7, whilst no longer forming part of ministerial policy as such, is nevertheless the appropriate way in which this issue should be approached. Accordingly therefore the comments of the consultant are attached as the most appropriate manner in which to assess the functional need for this house:-
- 31 Having regard to the criteria set out in Annexe A of PPS7 regarding the need to assess how many farm workers essentially need to live at or in the immediate vicinity of the main workplace for the proper functioning of the enterprise and whether there is existing accommodation that is suitable and available for this purpose.
- 32 In this respect I agree with the submission on behalf of the Landlords and Tenants, that a modern dairy farm of this size, with 200 plus dairy cows, and followers, can justify (under the relevant criteria) a need for both a principal occupiers dwelling, as well as a secondary stockperson's dwelling or additional assistance and for relief attendance.
- 33 As matters stand a secondary stockperson's dwelling is suitable and available or that purpose (West Lodge) but there is no principal dwelling. The existing available accommodation comprises West Lodge (just 150m) away, 34 Oveny Green Farm Cottage (600m away) and Turvins Farm House (2.5 miles away) of which only West Lodge in my view, is close enough t be suitable to assist in providing an immediate on site functional need.
- 34 To summarise I consider the farm does need , for the proper operation of the enterprise, two dwellings close to the dairy buildings, one of which should be suitably sized for a principal dwelling and for the farm tenant/enterprise manage.

- 35 If it were considered appropriate to enlarge West Lodge or that purpose, the corollary would be that a new, albeit smaller stockperson's dwelling would have to be provided instead, which I consider would need to be within sight and sound of the buildings, so the net effect may be similar in terms of the overall extent of new accommodation.
- 36 The second main issue is that of the financial soundness of the farming enterprise and the ability of the enterprise to support the costs of the proposed new dwelling. From the accounts submitted the farm enterprise has been making good profits. It appears that no additional rent is to be charged for the new house on the basis that the tenants relinquish to the landlords the off lying tenanted Turvins Farmhouse. From the tenants point of view the new dwelling, well positioned and of a suitable size and design for its functional purpose, would thus clearly assist the continued viability and operation of the farming enterprise.
- 37 From the point of view of the estate (Landlords) an analysis has been provided demonstrating that the cost of the dwelling (estimated at some £300k) would be financially sustainable, without any additional rent at Home Farm, based on the additional rent that would be gained from re-letting Turvins Farmhouse separately (some £30k pa).
- 38 To conclude I consider this proposal meets the functional and financial criteria relating to new agricultural dwellings set out in paragraphs 3 (i) – (iv) of Annex A to PPS7.

Sundridge Parish Council

- 39 The proposed new house has been subject to alterations and the comments made at each stage by the PC are detailed below:
- 40 The Parish Council after careful consideration feels there are insufficient changes to merit to altering earlier responses:
- 41 Our sympathy for the application is outweighed by the visual impact on the AONB and the Green Belt and the re-sited application is totally out of keeping with the surrounding area even allowing for the site being within the curtilage of the farm buildings.
- 42 03 March 2012: Although the location of the new house is an improvement on the first time this was proposed the build is still insufficiently different and is an unacceptable intrusion on Green Belt land
- 43 07 November 2011: This development proposal is for a large totally new build house in the Green Belt.
- 44 Whilst the applicants have attempted to provide justification for such a dwelling, the proposal is contrary to Green Belt policy and fails to satisfy a number of criteria as set out in government planning guidance, PPS7. The proposed location of this large dwelling would have a significant impact on the openness and views of the Green Belt and in an AONB.
- 45 The Parish Council considers that other less visually obtrusive options available to the Chevening Estate, such as extending other nearby properties, have not been

fully explored. Furthermore, it is considered that the functional needs of the farming operation could be satisfied within other nearby properties.

- 46 The size of the proposed dwelling, some 2,000 sq ft, seems rather large and inappropriate to the functional requirements of the farming enterprise and contrary to government guidance issued in PPS7.
- 47 Finally, the Parish Council is concerned as to the planning precedent which could be set in the local area by such a proposal.
- 48 12 September 2011: The Parish Council considers this proposal to constitute inappropriate development in the Green Belt and in an AONB, and that the applicants have not demonstrated any exceptional circumstances to justify such a development. Furthermore, the applicants have a significant property holding including a number of very nearby properties which are believed to have been let on assured shorthold tenancies in the open market. Finally, the approval of such a proposal would set a dangerous planning precedent within the District.

Representations

- 49 None.

Group Manager - Planning Appraisal

Principal Issues

- 50 The principal issues concern the principle of such development within the Green Belt, impact upon the openness and visual amenities of the Green Belt, impact upon the AONB, Affordable Housing, Ecology and impact upon the Historic Park & Garden.

Green Belt

- Principle of Development:

- 51 The NPPF is clear, as was PPG 2 'Green Belts', that new residential development is inappropriate development within the Green Belt. This is further considered at para 55 in the context of sustainability where it advises that "*LPAs should avoid new isolated homes in the countryside unless there are special circumstances such as... the essential need for a rural worker to live permanently at or near their place of work in the countryside*". In this case therefore the ability to demonstrate that the need for a new agricultural dwelling exists, as measured against the criteria used by PPS7 would comprise the very special circumstances required to outweigh the harm that such inappropriate development will cause to the Green Belt.
- 52 The need for the dwelling is explained at the outset of this report and it is clear from the considerations and advice of the Councils Rural Planning Consultant that it is considered that the proposed new dwelling would meet the financial and functional needs of the business, as determined by Annexe A of PPS7.
- 53 Therefore subject to consideration of the impact upon the openness and visual amenities of the Green Belt it is considered that the principle of this development could be acceptable.

- Openness and Visual Amenities

- 54 The farm as a whole lies in a highly visible location on rising ground surrounded by open fields and parkland associated with Chevening House. It is clear from the Consultants assessment of the need for this house that the dwelling needs to be located within sight and sound of the farm. Given the openness of the landscape at this point, this has proven something of an issue and an initial application sought to locate the house closer to Sundridge Hill to the south of the access road. This however was concluded to be unacceptably intrusive within the surrounding countryside – being visible and unshielded by farm buildings from some considerable distance.
- 55 Any new building within the Green Belt will, by definition, harm the openness of the Green Belt at that point. This building should be assessed therefore against the fact that it is needed within close proximity to the farm, and in terms of the wider impact upon the Green Belt. The amended scheme has sought to locate the house and garage within the confines of the adjacent farm. It is now proposed to lie to the north of the access road broadly adjacent to existing agricultural buildings. Its position has been moved so that when viewed from land to the south and east it does not project beyond the outer edges of development already forming a part of this farm. It is therefore viewed against the context of adjacent development rather than appearing to sit outside the envelope of the adjacent farmyard. In combination with the tree belt to the north and west and some trees to the south it is considered that this location minimises the impact upon the wider landscape and upon the openness of the surrounding Green Belt.
- 56 The house is considered to be of an acceptable size for a farmhouse and as the main accommodation associated with this farm. The design is traditional, with the use of good quality materials, which it is considered would assimilate sympathetically into the landscape. It is not considered that this development would appear out of character in this rural area or that it would harm the visual amenities of the Green Belt.
- 57 Overall it is considered that the need for the dwelling, the quality of the design and materials and the location are sufficient to outweigh the harm to the openness of the Green Belt by virtue of inappropriateness.
- 58 It has been suggested that the existing Lodge building could be extended to form the main farmhouse and then a second smaller dwelling be constructed as an alternative to this scheme. That would result in a different combination of buildings within the Green Belt, but a combination that would nevertheless still have an impact upon the openness of the surrounding Green Belt. Overall it is not considered that such a proposal would offer significant benefits to the scheme now proposed.

Impact upon AONB

- 59 The surrounding AONB comprises a great variety of buildings, both grouped together and in more isolated locations. The new house would obviously add further built form to this site. In this location and with such a traditional design it is considered however that the house would sit sympathetically within the wider countryside and would not appear out of character with its surroundings nor of

such size or in such location as to be visually intrusive nor dominant within the wider landscape.

Affordable Housing

- 60 Although this application makes provision of a single new house policy SP3 is not applied to a number of types of residential accommodation including agricultural workers accommodation whose occupation is restricted by condition.

Ecology

- 61 The site lies approximately 80m from the nearest band of woodland which is a Site of Nature Conservation Interest. The landscape is considered to be consistent with an agricultural landscape being generally species poor and heavily improved.
- 62 A Habitat survey identifies potential for bats around the site, within existing buildings (which are to remain unaffected by this application), and one particular tree and potentially badgers on adjacent land. A number of enhancements are suggested, for instance, designing in potential roosting sites, fit a barn owl box, and these are considered an acceptable approach to these works.

Impact upon the Historic Park/Garden

- 63 As can be seen from the comments of English Heritage this site lies within a protected parkland associated with Chevening House. That consultation suggested that the house be moved more closely within the farmyard and a small change has been made to bring the house within the confines of adjacent buildings in order to minimise impact on the parkland surrounding the site and views of this part of the parkland when viewed from the south and east. On that basis and in view of the character and quality of the adjacent agricultural buildings and their impact upon the parkland, it is not considered that this house would cause such harm to the openness and character of this outer edge of the parkland as to be harmful to its overall character and setting. English Heritage has suggested that further planting of parkland trees could take place to the south of the house and a condition is proposed that would make such provision.

Access Issues

- 64 Access to the house will be dealt with by an associated building regulations application.

Conclusion

- 65 A re-organisation of the Chevening Estate has resulted in the expansion of this dairy unit to the point where a second residential unit is required in close proximity to the farm.
- 66 The Council's Rural Consultant advises that this unit would meet the tests of relevant guidance such as to demonstrate a functional and financial need for this dwelling within 'sight and sound' of the farmyard. The siting and design has been the subject of discussion with the Council and this revised scheme is considered to minimise the effects upon the surrounding Green Belt and AONB. The site lies

within registered garden and with the revised location in closer proximity to the adjacent farm buildings is it is considered that the impact upon this parkland is also reduced to an acceptable level such that the house would sit comfortably within its surroundings.

Background Papers

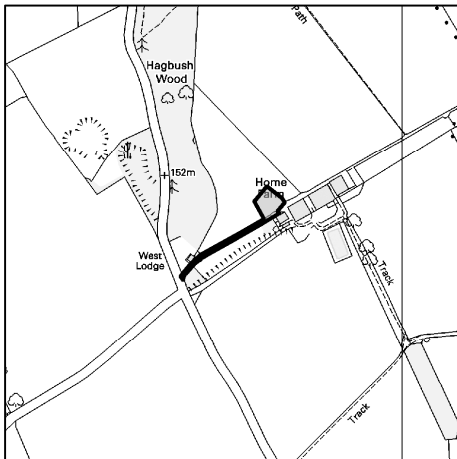
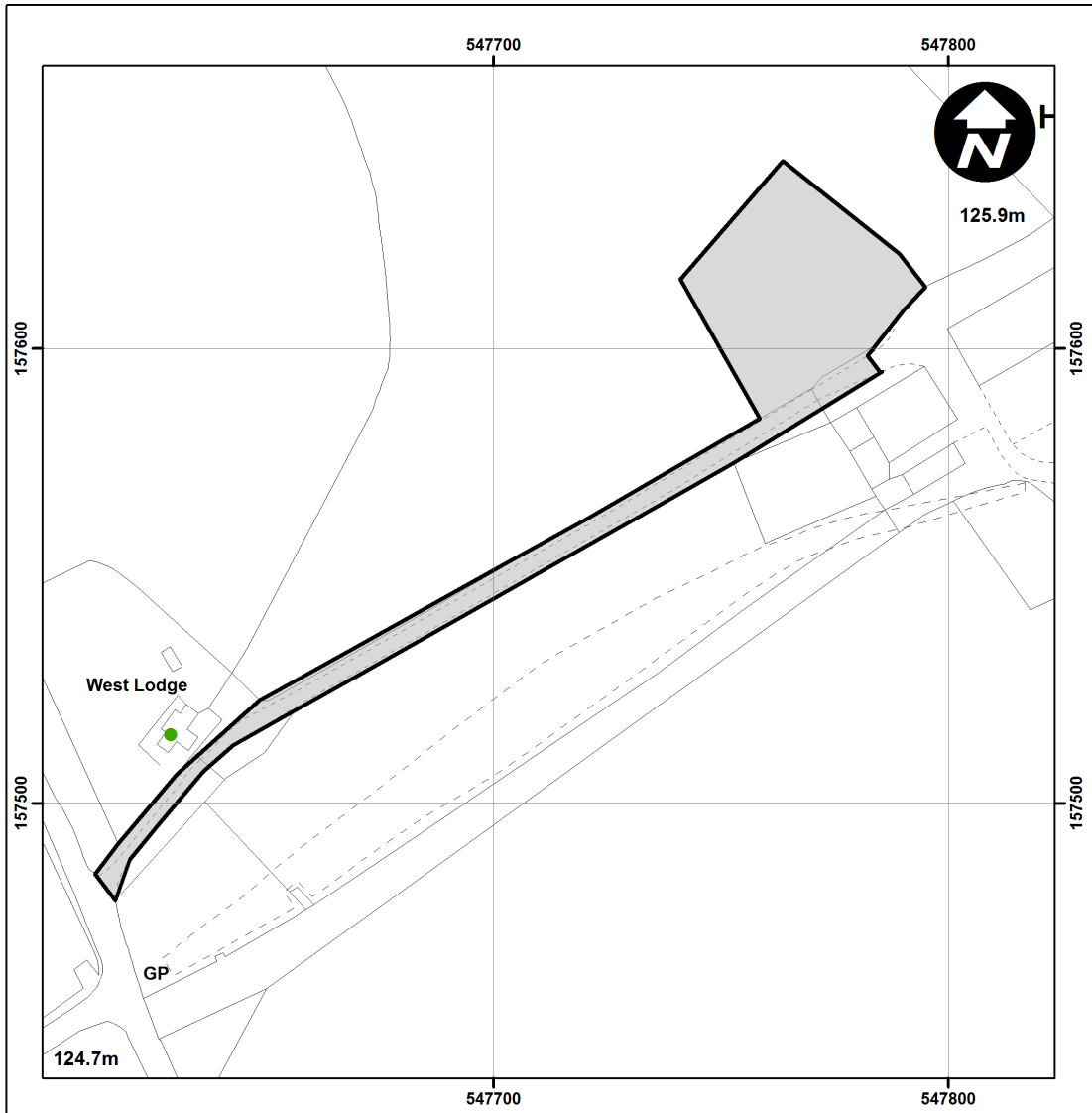
Site and Block Plans

Contact Officer(s): Lesley Westphal Extension: 7235

Kristen Paterson
Community and Planning Services Director

Link to application details: <http://pa.sevenoaks.gov.uk/online-applications/applicationDetails.do?activeTab=summary&keyVal=M07FRUBKOCR00>

Link to associated documents: <http://pa.sevenoaks.gov.uk/online-applications/applicationDetails.do?activeTab=documents&keyVal=M07FRUBKOCR00>



Site Plan

Scale 1:1,250
Date 06.06.2012



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BLOCK PLAN

